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1 October 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director
for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Hijackings

1. A review of the hijacking problem--with a special look at the question of vulnerability of US citizens to becoming hostages--leads to the conclusion that the overall situation remains serious. The number one problem, of course, is still the fedayeen. Our Middle East analysts believe that the likelihood of hijackings by the fedayeen will remain high for the foreseeable future.

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2. Under US prodding, many friendly governments have instituted strict security precautions, but there are still some conspicuous trouble spots convenient for fedayeen exploitation.

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3. The likelihood of being hijacked in Latin America is probably as great today as in the past, and there is no reason to believe that the threat will diminish over the next several months. The presence of air marshals and the

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increased security precautions at US airports help to reduce the possibilities of hijacking on US carriers operating from the US, but just how much this will achieve over the long run is difficult to determine. We do not know at this time to what extent guards are being used on US flights to Latin America.

4. Hijacking will probably continue to be a popular device for Latin American terrorists to gain publicity and to free prisoners. The danger of being hijacked on local carriers, therefore, remains high and might even increase. The various countries are stepping up their security precautions, but shortages of personnel and equipment are badly hampering the effort.

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5. Most Far East countries have taken measures to prevent hijacking, but precautions thus far are generally less stringent than elsewhere. Pan Am, TWA, BOAC, Swiss Air and most large carriers have instituted fairly elaborate procedures for international flights stopping at the major terminals in the area, but local officials in most Far East countries seem to believe that hijacking attempts are much more likely to occur in the Middle East or Europe.

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